

AL.2, 1994-57
C.2

Alcohol and Drugs in Alberta

AADAC

Information and
Program
Development
Services

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN ALBERTA

Perspectives on Their Use and Effects

CANADIANA

AVR
APR 6 1994

June, 1993

Prepared by

Wesley Slavik

Rudy Faist

Information and Program Development Services

Funding provided by Health and Welfare Canada

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	ii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose of the Report.....	1
B. Organization of the Report.....	2
II. ALCOHOL USE IN ALBERTA.....	3
A. Alcohol Consumption and Availability	3
B. The Commercial Side of Alcohol Use.....	6
C. Costs and Consequences of Alcohol Use.....	7
D. Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Alcohol Use in Alberta	9
III. LICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA	10
A. The Licit Drug Industry	10
B. Licit Drug Use by Albertans	11
C. Gender Differences in Licit Drug Use	13
D. Licit Drug Use by Alberta Youth.....	13
E. Licit Drug Use by Alberta Seniors.....	14
F. Consequences of Licit Drug Use.....	14
G. Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Licit Drug Use in Alberta	15
IV. ILLICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA.....	16
A. Illicit Drug Use by Albertans	16
B. Illicit Drug Use by Gender.....	18
C. Illicit Drug Use by Alberta Youth.....	20
D. Consequences of Illicit Drug Use.....	20
E. Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Illicit Drug Use in Alberta	22
REFERENCES.....	23

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Trends in Drinking Status Among Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1985 - 1991	3
2. Per Capita Consumption for the Population 15 Years and Older in Litres of Absolute Alcohol for Canada, the Provinces and the Territories, 1986/87 to 1990/91	5
3. Use of Selected Medicines by Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990	11
4. Smoking Habits of Alberta Smokers (15 Years and Older), 1991.....	12
5. Use of Selected Medicines by Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990.....	13
6. Primary Licit Drug Problem for Adult and Adolescent Clients Discharged from AADAC Treatment Programs, 1991-92.....	14
7. Lifetime Use of Illicit Drugs, Alberta and Canada, 1989.....	16
8. Marijuana Use of Albertans, 1985 and 1990	17
9. Illicit Drug Users by Industry for Alberta, 1992	18
10. Primary Illicit Drug Problem for Adult and Adolescent Clients Discharged from AADAC Treatment Programs, 1991-92.....	21
11. Drug-Related Criminal Offenses for Alberta, 1990.....	21

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Per Capita Consumption of Absolute Alcohol, 15 Yrs. +, Alberta, 1982 to 1991	4
2. Cost of Alcohol and Alcohol Consumption for Alberta, 1982 to 1991	6
3. Impaired Driving Licence Suspensions, Alberta, 1985 to 1990.....	8
4. Lifetime Drug Use by Gender for Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990.....	19
5. Marijuana Use by Alberta Adolescents, 1981 - 1989.....	20

LIST OF FIGURES

Page No.

1	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	1
2	Cost of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	2
3	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	3
4	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	4
5	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	5
6	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	6
7	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	7
8	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	8
9	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	9
10	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	10
11	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	11
12	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	12
13	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	13
14	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	14
15	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	15
16	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	16
17	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	17
18	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	18
19	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	19
20	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	20
21	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	21
22	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	22
23	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	23
24	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	24
25	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	25
26	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	26
27	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	27
28	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	28
29	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	29
30	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	30
31	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	31
32	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	32
33	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	33
34	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	34
35	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	35
36	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	36
37	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	37
38	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	38
39	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	39
40	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	40
41	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	41
42	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	42
43	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	43
44	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	44
45	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	45
46	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	46
47	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	47
48	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	48
49	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	49
50	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol in Alberta, 1955-1975	50

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Drinking alcohol, using prescription and over-the counter drugs, and smoking tobacco are widespread and generally accepted parts of our way of life in Alberta. Producing these products, buying and using them, represent a blend of economic and social activities that take place according to informal social rules, written laws and regulations. Commercial activities related to these products benefit many people and organizations here in Alberta, in Canada and elsewhere.

Serious problems often arise for those who misuse or abuse alcohol or drugs (both licit and illicit). This adds hardship to their lives and to their families, as well as a growing cost to society. Accordingly, there is public concern and support for treating and preventing alcohol and drug-related problems. Discussion and debate on alcohol and drug-related issues continue as their consumption evolves within Alberta society.

The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) has been interested in and has monitored the patterns and trends in alcohol and drug use by Albertans for some time. AADAC is an agency of the Government of Alberta with a mandate to encourage Albertans in the development of attitudes and behaviours which prevent alcohol and drug abuse. The Commission has responsibility for providing addictions treatment, conducting education and prevention programs on alcohol and drug abuse, and providing relevant research-based information in order to help foster an informed public.

This report is a summary of three comprehensive AADAC reports: Alcohol in Alberta: Perspectives on Its Use and Effects, Licit Drugs in Alberta: Perspectives On their Use and Effects and Illicit Drugs in Alberta: Perspectives On their Use and Effects. Production of all three of these reports were funded by Health and Welfare Canada. AADAC would like to thank Marc Eliany and Jeff Niles of Health and Welfare Canada for their assistance in the production of the reports.

The purpose of this report is to provide a current and comprehensive portrait of alcohol and drug use in Alberta by presenting information from published literature which includes planning and research information from other government departments. The information is presented from three different perspectives:

- 1) consumption and availability;
- 2) the commercial side of alcohol and drug use, and;
- 3) the costs and consequences of alcohol and drug abuse.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report has three main sections, each corresponding to the perspectives just noted. The most current data for Alberta is presented. Some trend data will be included based on its availability and relevance. The first section of this report will deal with alcohol use, as it is the most widely used drug in Alberta. The second section deals with licit drug use and the third section with illicit drug use.

II. ALCOHOL USE IN ALBERTA

Alcohol has been and continues to be the drug of choice for a majority of Albertans. While use of alcohol has declined in recent years, significant amounts are still being consumed which has led to both negative and positive outcomes.

A. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND AVAILABILITY

- In 1991, 79% of adult Albertans surveyed said they drink beverages containing alcohol over the past year. Fewer than one in ten reported never having used alcohol (Table 1).
- The proportion of current drinkers, while in decline, has been close to 80% in recent years (Table 1).

Table 1
Trends in Drinking Status Among Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1985 - 1991

Year	Never Drank	Former Drinker	Current Drinkers
1985	6.7%	9.6%	83.0%
1989	5.9%	12.2%	81.9%
1991	8.0%	12.6%	79.4%

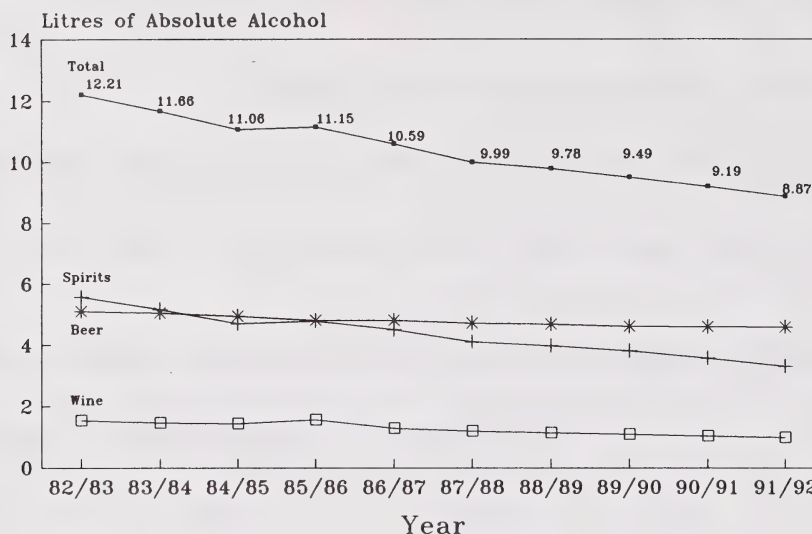
Note: Current drinkers are those who consumed at least one drink in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Source: Canada's Health Promotion Survey, 1988,
National Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey, 1989 and
General Social Survey, 1991.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- On average, adult (15 years and older) Albertans consumed about 9 litres of pure alcohol per person in 1991 (Figure 1). This is equal to the amount contained in 522 bottles or 44 cases of regular beer, or 30 (750 ml) bottles of spirits (hard liquor) or 91 (750 ml) bottles of wine.

Figure 1 - Per Capita Consumption of Absolute Alcohol, 15 Yrs. +, Alberta, 1982 to 1991



Source: ALCB Annual Report
and Statistics Canada.

- Overall, men are more likely to be regular drinkers. The proportion of regular drinkers peaks at ages 20-24 and then declines with advancing age.
- A 1991 study indicates that 80% of Alberta's workers drink alcohol. This is roughly the same proportion of drinkers found in the total Alberta population.
- Drinkers' choice in beverages in 1991 were: beer, then spirits, with wine coming a distant third. "Light" beers continue to be popular.
- In the ten year period from 1982 to 1991, alcohol consumption in Alberta declined by 27%.
- A number of factors may be contributing to the decline in alcohol consumption, such as:
 - * an aging population who tend to drink less;
 - * price increases for alcoholic beverages, combined with decreased disposable income;
 - * increased health consciousness;
 - * more responsible attitudes toward drinking;
 - * changes in and/or more stringent enforcement of laws (i.e. impaired driving); and
 - * effective treatment and prevention initiatives.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- In recent years, Albertans have tended to drink close to the national average (Table 2).

Table 2
Per Capita Consumption for the Population 15 Years and Older
in Litres of Absolute Alcohol
for Canada, the Provinces and the Territories, 1986/87 to 1990/91

	1986/87 Litres (Rank*)	1987/88 Litres (Rank*)	1988/89 Litres (Rank*)	1989/90 Litres (Rank*)	1990/91 Litres (Rank*)
Yukon	16.88 (1)	16.08 (1)	16.68 (1)	16.29 (1)	15.39 (1)
N.W.T.	11.59 (2)	11.69 (2)	11.58 (2)	11.39 (2)	10.89 (2)
B.C.	11.09 (3)	10.58 (3)	9.98 (4)	9.98 (3)	9.80 (3)
Nfld.	9.88 (6)	10.08 (4)	10.08 (3)	9.58 (4)	9.20 (4)
Alta.	10.59 (4)	9.99 (5)	9.78 (5)	9.49 (5)	9.19 (5)
Ont.	10.08 (5)	9.99 (5)	9.59 (6)	9.28 (6)	8.90 (6)
N.S.	8.69 (8)	8.59 (8)	8.38 (8)	8.28 (7)	7.79 (7)
Man.	9.29 (7)	8.88 (7)	8.69 (7)	8.08 (9)	7.79 (7)
Que.	8.28 (10)	8.48 (9)	8.29 (9)	8.09 (8)	7.60 (9)
P.E.I.	8.19 (11)	7.78 (11)	7.90 (11)	7.78 (10)	7.59 (10)
Sask.	8.49 (9)	8.28 (10)	8.18 (10)	7.58 (11)	7.20 (11)
N.B.	7.39 (12)	7.19 (12)	7.08 (12)	6.88 (12)	6.59 (12)
Canada	9.38	9.49	9.09	8.79	8.48

* For rank, 1 = highest and 12 = lowest consumption level among the provinces and territories.

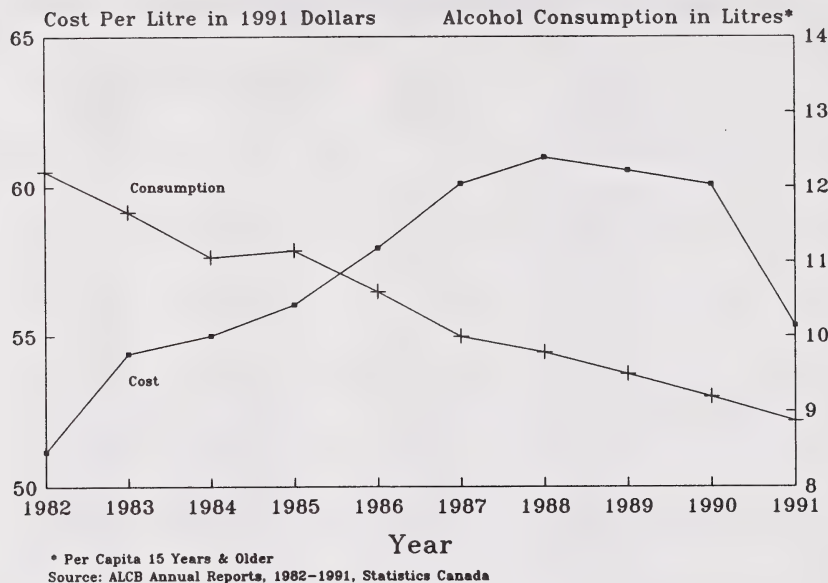
Source: Statistics Canada, 1991.

- Compared to 47 countries surveyed in 1989, Alberta ranked 22nd highest overall, in terms of total per capita (among total population) consumption of absolute alcohol.
- In 1991, 66% of alcohol sales in Alberta occurred through the province- wide network of Alberta Liquor Control Board (ALCB) stores. The remaining 34% of alcohol distributed by the ALCB was purchased by 6,139 licensees and sold to the public. This number of licensees has increased by 50% in the ten years since 1982.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- As the cost of beverage alcohol has increased, Albertans have either cut down their drinking or sought out less costly drinking options (Figure 2).

**Figure 2 - Cost of Alcohol and Alcohol Consumption
for Alberta, 1982 to 1991**



- In standard 1990 dollars, Albertans 15 years and older spent an average of \$562 on alcohol at ALCB prices in 1990 compared to \$691 in 1981, a decrease of 19%. In the same time period, disposable income decreased by 12%, while the cost of alcohol increased by 14%.
- Non-beverage alcohol products (NBA's) are household and industrial products not intended for human consumption, but which are ingested for their alcohol content. One NBA product that has been of particular concern in Alberta is Lysol^(R) brand aerosol disinfectant. Studies conducted in 1990 and 1992 in Edmonton's inner city suggest that Lysol^(R) use has decreased.

B. THE COMMERCIAL SIDE OF ALCOHOL USE

- In 1990, approximately 1,300 Albertans were directly employed by the brewing, distilling and wine manufacturing industries.
- In 1990, the Alberta brewing industry purchased \$87 million worth of grain, supplies and other materials.
- Although precise numbers are not available, it is estimated that the brewing, distilling and wine manufacturing industries in Canada spend many millions of dollars annually to advertise their products.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- In 1991, Albertans 15 years and older spent an average of \$869 at restaurants, caterers and taverns, with a significant portion going to alcohol sales.
- In 1989, alcohol sales accounted for close to one-quarter (24%) of total hotel revenue in Alberta.
- In 1992, provincial and federal taxes and levies accounted for 56%, 64%, and 82% respectively of the retail cost of domestic beer, wine and standard spirits.
- In 1991, the Alberta Liquor Control Board had a net income of \$408 million on total sales over \$1 billion representing 218 million litres of beverage alcohol.

C. COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL USE

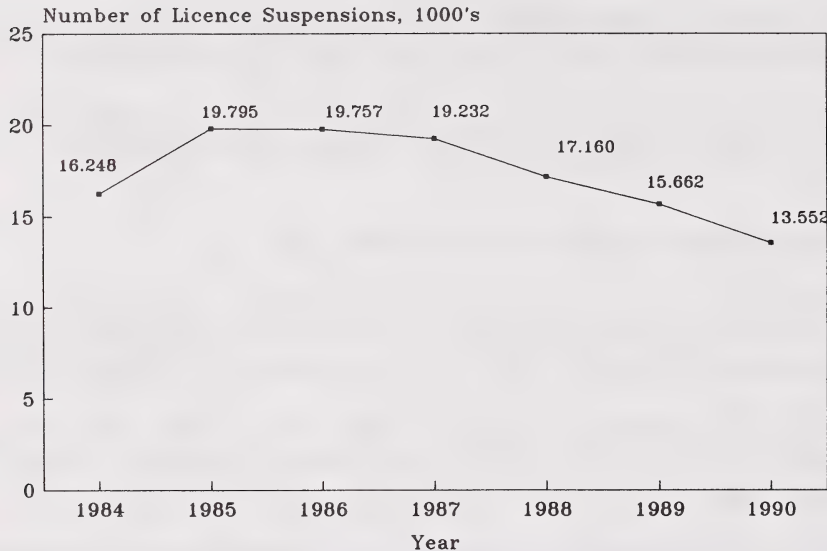
- The Addiction Research Foundation (ARF, Ontario) has estimated the number of alcoholics for Canada and the provinces. The ARF estimated that there were close to 35,000 alcoholics in Alberta in 1988. This is equivalent to 3% of adult drinkers in 1988.
- In surveys of adult Albertans conducted in 1980, 1984, and 1989, 17%, 19% and 30% respectively said they had at some time had a problem with alcohol or drugs in their immediate family.
- In 1991/92, 33,628 clients were admitted to provincial treatment facilities operated or funded by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). Alcohol was recorded as the primary drug of concern for 81% of adult clients and 69% of adolescent clients.
- In 1991/92, the cost of AADAC's treatment, education, and prevention programs totalled \$34,678,167.
- Study results vary, but investigators conclude that alcohol abuse may be a factor in as high as 30% of hospital admissions.
- In 1989/90, acute care and psychiatric hospitals in Alberta recorded over 84,000 patient days for alcohol-related disorders, resulting in an estimated cost to the province of \$37 million.
- In 1989, two-thirds (66%) of the 153 recorded liver disease deaths in Alberta were alcohol-related.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- Although the number of impaired driving licence suspensions in Alberta has declined by ~~17%~~ since 1985, there were 13,552 suspensions in 1990 (Figure 3).

32%

**Figure 3 - Impaired Driving Licence Suspensions,
Alberta, 1984 to 1990**



Source: Alberta Solicitor General

- In 1991, close to one-quarter (26%) of Alberta drivers in fatal collisions were judged to have consumed alcohol prior to the accident.
- Among the ten provinces in 1990, Alberta had the second highest rate for number of persons charged with impaired driving offenses.
- In 1991, 5.2% of Alberta workers report having used alcohol at work (including lunch and other breaks) in the past month. This translates into over 60,000 out of Alberta's 1.2 million workforce. By industry, those most likely to report drinking at work are in the oil and gas extraction, construction, telecommunications, or manufacturing industries.
- Costs associated with substance use-related worker absenteeism is \$400 million dollars to the Alberta economy per year.
- Also associated with alcohol abuse are major indirect costs of a personal and social nature affecting people and the communities where they live, work and play. These costs are difficult to measure and available data reflect only part of the total picture. For example:

* Substance use involvement was reported in one-third of all homicides in Canada for 1990.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- * A 1992 study of University of Alberta students indicated drug or alcohol involvement in almost half of reported sexual assaults. In 40% of the cases, the victim had consumed alcohol and/or drugs. A similar percentage (44%) reported that the perpetrator had consumed alcohol and/or drugs.
- * Among Albertans who drink, 31% had been physically assaulted by someone who had been drinking.

D. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARDS ALCOHOL USE IN ALBERTA

- In a 1989 survey, Albertans were asked to respond to several statements about why people drink. Albertans indicated that they drank:
 - * to be sociable (83%);
 - * to add to the enjoyment of meals (44%);
 - * to help them relax (41%);
 - * to feel good (32%);
 - * to feel less inhibited or shy (16%); and
 - * to forget their worries (10%).
- In the same survey, Albertans were asked how much a person in a given situation should feel free to drink. In general, Albertans felt that drinking was most appropriate when at a party or at a bar and least appropriate when out to lunch with a co-worker.

III. LICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA

Licit drugs include prescription and over-the-counter drugs, tobacco and alcohol and constitute the greatest part of overall drug use in Alberta. Licit drug use in Alberta can be viewed from many perspectives. While the use of licit drugs contribute to the health and well-being of Albertans, problems can arise through drug misuse and abuse.

This section of the report attempts to provide an overview of the many aspects of licit drug use in Alberta by presenting available data on the negative and positive aspects associated with licit drugs.

A. THE LICIT DRUG INDUSTRY

- The drug manufacturing industry in Canada is mainly based in Quebec and Ontario.
- In 1991, Canada's pharmaceutical industry consisted of approximately 150 manufacturing establishments with almost \$3.8 billion in domestic shipments.
- In Alberta, dollar sales of licit drugs (non-tobacco) in 1991 totalled \$365.6 million, with 551 people employed in the industry. In addition, there were 2,193 registered pharmacists in Alberta in 1990.
- In 1990, per capita consumption of manufactured cigarettes in Canada was 1,700 cigarettes per person. Canada is tied with Czechoslovakia, France and Taiwan for 20th place out of 124 selected countries in regard to per capita consumption.
- Though the tobacco industry is still active in Canada, it is not based in Alberta. The total cost of tobacco use to the province has been estimated to be in excess of \$300 million each year (these costs are due to a variety of reasons, including health care costs related to tobacco-related illnesses).
- Tobacco companies have supported Canadian cultural programs with over \$40 million in 1991. Beyond the provision of funds, tobacco companies have also lent assistance in event design, promotion, and contacts. Precise figures as to Alberta contributions are not available.

B. LICIT DRUG USE BY ALBERTANS

- Opiates such as codeine and demerol are the most commonly used prescription substances among Albertans 15 years and older. Sleeping pills are second in usage, followed by tranquilizers (Table 3).

Table 3
Use of Selected Medicines by Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990

Drug	Alberta	Canada
Codeine/Demerol/ Morphine	16.6%	11.2%
Sleeping Pills	6.1%	6.9%
Tranquilizers	3.2%	5.2%
Anti-Depressants	2.9%	2.8%
Diet Pills/Stimulants	1.1%	0.9%

Note: Findings are based on use in the previous twelve month period.

Source: 1990 Health Promotion Survey.

- Blue Cross is an insurance program designed to underwrite the costs of medication for subscribers. Approximately 60% of Albertans are covered by this program. In the 1991 calendar year, almost 8 million claims were processed for these subscribers which were valued at approximately \$215 million. For Alberta Family and Social Services clients, an additional 2.5 million claims were processed, worth about \$59 million.
- A 1991 survey showed that almost two-thirds (65%) of Albertans aged 15 years and older are non-smokers. This finding is fairly consistent with Canada as a whole (68%).

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- Of the estimated 651,000 smokers aged 15 years and older in Alberta, 21% report themselves to be occasional smokers (Table 4).

Table 4
Smoking Habits of Alberta Smokers (15 Years and Older), 1991

	Females	Males	Total
Occasional Smokers	19.5%	21.7%	20.7%
1-10 cigarettes daily	20.8%	n.r.	14.9%
11-25 cigarettes daily	56.5%	60.5%	58.4%
26 plus cigarettes daily	n.r.	8.3%	5.9%

Note: n.r. - not reported, sampling variability too high.

Source: 1991 General Social Survey.

C. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LICIT DRUG USE

- There are differences in licit drug use patterns between women and men. Alberta women use prescription opiates and tranquilizers to a greater extent than do men, though men use sleeping pills to a slightly higher degree (Table 5). In Canada, use of all types of licit drugs was higher among women than men.

Table 5
Use of Selected Medicines by Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990

Medicine	Female	Male	Both Sexes
Tranquilizers	3.6%	2.8%	3.2%
Diet/Stimulants	1.1%	n.r.*	1.1%
Anti-Depressants	3.8%	1.9%	2.9%
Codeine/Demerol/Morphine	18.6%	14.6%	16.6%
Sleeping Pills	7.5%	4.7%	6.1%

* Note: n.r. - not releasable due to high sampling variability. Findings are based on use in the previous twelve month period.

Source: 1990 Health Promotion Survey.

- According to a 1991 study, approximately the same proportion of women and men smoke in Alberta. That is, 37% of Alberta men smoke and 34% of Alberta women smoke.

D. LICIT DRUG USE BY ALBERTA YOUTH

- In a 1989 AADAC study, it was found that 4% of Alberta's adolescents (12-17 years old) used inhalants over a six month period. Approximately 4% had consumed amphetamines over a six month period. During the same time period, 3% had taken barbiturates.
- AADAC's annual report indicates that those under the age of 18 made up 7.2% (1,684) of AADAC's 23,363 clients who received treatment who received treatment at AADAC facilities in the 1991-1992 fiscal year. It should be pointed out that these clients may use both licit and illicit drugs.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- In a 1989 AADAC study, it was found that among 469 surveyed adolescents (aged 12 to 17 years), 19% were tobacco smokers and 3% had used smokeless tobacco in the past month.

E. LICIT DRUG USE BY ALBERTA SENIORS

- Data from the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Statistical Supplement indicates that for seniors (defined as those aged 65 plus) and widows, there were a total of 4,420,542 prescriptions in the 1988-89 fiscal year, with an average gross payment per prescription of \$24.25. These prescriptions to seniors accounted for 81% of total prescriptions dispensed.
- According to a 1991 study, the majority of those aged 65 or more in Alberta do not smoke (83%). This finding is consistent with Canadian findings in general.

F. CONSEQUENCES OF LICIT DRUG USE

- Overall, licit drugs as a primary drug problem for AADAC adult and adolescent clients is quite low. Notable differences between adults and adolescents can be seen for tranquilizers and inhalants (Table 6).

Table 6
Primary Licit Drug Problem for Adult and Adolescent Clients Discharged from
AADAC Treatment Programs, 1991-92

Drug	Adults (18+)	Adolescents (12-17)
Tranquilizers	1.9%	0.5%
Barbiturates	0.6%	0.7%
Amphetamines	0.2%	0.4%
Inhalants	0.2%	2.8%
Talwin and Ritalin	0.5%	0.2%
Number of Clients	588	44

Source: AADAC.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- In 1990, Alberta had the highest theft/loss rate in the country for many pharmaceutical drugs in Canada. These drugs include codeine, pentazocine, morphine, pethidine, methlpheniadate, and barbiturates. There were a total of 644 thefts and losses of opiates, stimulants and hypnotics in the province.
- In 1990, Alberta had the second highest rate of prescription forgeries for opiates and stimulants and hypnotics in the country. There was a total of 172 such forged prescriptions in Alberta.
- For the same year, Alberta had the highest rate of multiple doctoring in Canada (with 145 cases).
- It has been estimated that 2,026 Albertans aged between 15 and 74 died due to smoking in 1986.
- According to Alberta Health, there were 4,750 discharges from Alberta hospitals in 1990/91 that were related to the use of both licit and illicit drugs such as cocaine, cannabis, amphetamines, and tobacco. These discharges led to 50,650 days spent in hospital, with an average length of stay of 10.7 days. Using the most recent available figure to operate a hospital bed in Alberta (in 1989/90, \$439 per day), the resulting cost to the province was \$22,235,350 for licit and illicit drug-related problems in 1990/91.
- Mental hospitals in Alberta expended close to \$843,000 on drugs in 1988/89 or almost 1% of their total operating budget. Also in 1988/89, Alberta public general hospitals expended over \$59 million on drugs, or slightly more than 3% of their total operating expenses.

G. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARD LICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA

- According to a 1990 study, 28% of Albertans believed that quitting smoking would improve their health and well-being.
- Findings from the same study indicate that almost half (48%) of Albertans felt that smoking is an issue the government should be dealing with.
- According to a 1990 Alberta survey, the majority (77%) of Albertans indicated that second-hand smoke can be harmful and a larger majority (84%) favour stricter legislation to restrict the sale of tobacco to minors.

IV. ILLICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA

Illicit or street drugs include substances that are manufactured, imported, distributed, or held unlawfully as regulated under the Narcotic Control Act and the Food and Drugs Act. The use and effects of illicit drugs can be viewed from a number of perspectives.

This section of the report attempts to provide an overview of the many aspects of illicit drug use in Alberta by presenting available data on them.

A. ILLICIT DRUG USE BY ALBERTANS

- According to a 1989 study, almost a third of Albertans (aged 15 and older) have tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime. Patterns of lifetime illicit drug use in Alberta closely resemble the national picture (Table 7).

Table 7
Lifetime Use of Illicit Drugs, Alberta and Canada, 1989

Drug	Alberta	Canada
Marijuana	27.8%	23.2%
LSD/speed/heroin	5.5%	4.1%
Cocaine	3.7%	3.5%

Source: 1989 National Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey.

- The most popular illicit drug in Alberta is cannabis, which includes both solid and liquid forms of marijuana and hashish. According to a 1990 study, 5% of Albertans aged 15 plus had used the substance at least once during the previous year (Table 8). A 1989 study revealed that compared to the rest of the country, Alberta is above average in the number of those using cannabis more than once a month.

Table 8
Marijuana Use of Albertans, 1985 and 1990

	1985	1990
Male	9%	8%
Female	5%	2%
Total Average	9%	5%

Note: Findings are based on use in the previous twelve month period.

Source: 1985 and 1990 Health Promotion Survey.

- According to a 1989 study, cocaine use is marginally lower in Alberta (1.1%) than the national average. The use of LSD, speed, or heroin is slightly higher in Alberta (7%) in comparison to Canada.
- According to a 1992 study, 6.5% of Alberta workers had used one or more illicit drugs during the previous twelve months (Table 9). A very small percentage (0.5%) of Alberta workers had used illicit drugs on the job during the same time period. This represents approximately 6,000 workers out of Alberta's 1.2 million work force. Use of drugs while on the job was highest among those employed in the construction industry, although differences between industries were not extensive.

Table 9
Illicit Drug Users by Industry for Alberta, 1992

Oil and Gas Extraction	12.2%
Transportation	11.0%
Construction	10.3%
Forestry/Mining	9.8%
Other	7.7%
Manufacturing	7.6%
Wholesale/Retail	7.3%
Other Services	5.3%
Public Administration	5.2%
Telecommunications	4.7%
Utilities	4.2%
Finance	3.0%
Health Care	3.0%
Education	2.6%
Agriculture	1.5%
Social Services	0.0%

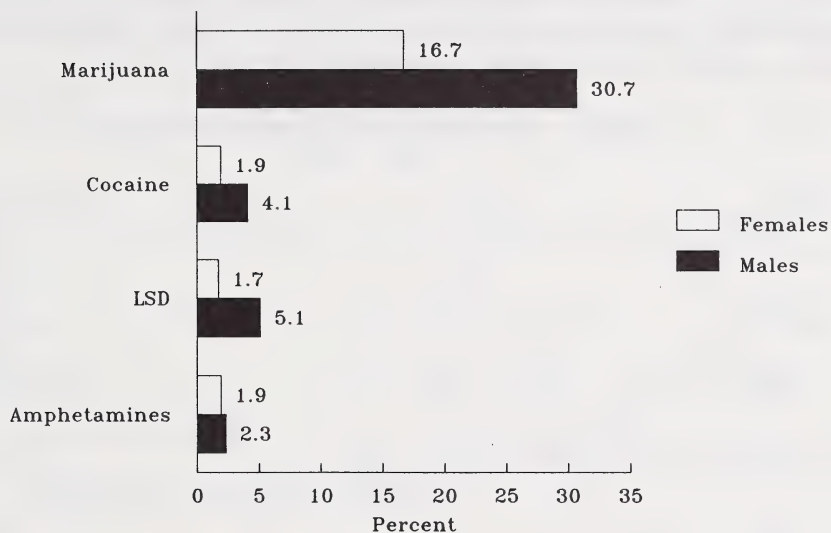
Source: 1992 AADAC Workplace study.

- Concerning performance enhancing drug use in Alberta, reliable estimates are not available but indicators suggest that steroids are used most often. This use is not confined to any one group. Users range from ages 15 to 45 and most are athletes (amateur and professional), body-builders, and exotic dancers. The health concerns surrounding performance enhancing drug use include physical side effects and the potential for HIV transmission when the drugs are injected.

B. ILLICIT DRUG USE BY GENDER

- A general finding emerging from a number of studies is that on the whole, men use illicit drugs to a greater degree than do women.
- Looking at the most extensively used illicit drug in Alberta, marijuana, a 1990 study shows that approximately 2% of Alberta women had used the drug during the previous year compared to 8% of Alberta men.
- The same study indicates that when looking at lifetime use of illicit drugs, 17% of women had used cannabis (compared to 31% of men), 2% had used cocaine (compared to 4% of men), 2% had used LSD (compared to 5% of men), and 2% had used amphetamines (the same percentage as men) (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Lifetime Drug Use by Gender for Albertans (15 Years and Older), 1990

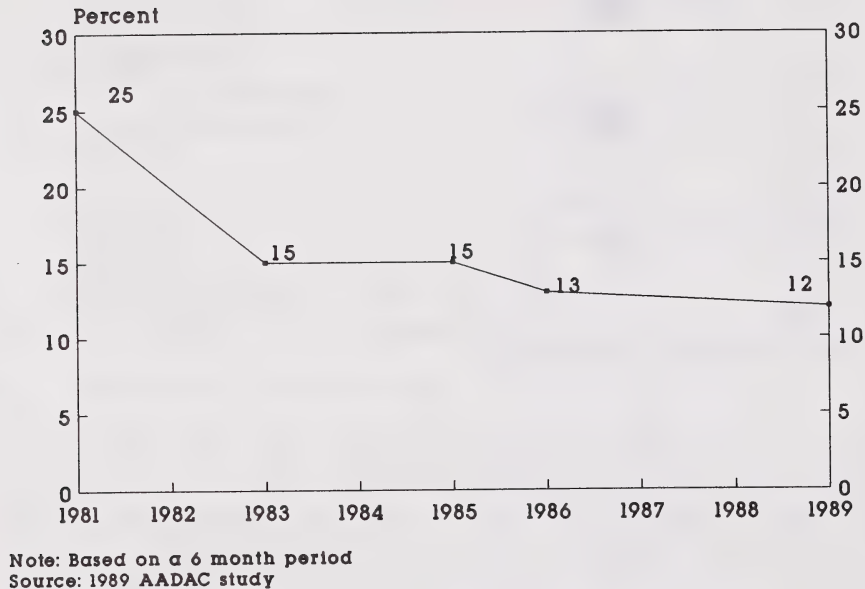


Source: 1990 Health Promotion Survey

C. ILLICIT DRUG USE BY ALBERTA YOUTH

- According to a 1989 AADAC study looking at drug use, cannabis was found to be the most prevalent drug for Alberta adolescents (12-17 years old). Approximately 12% had used cannabis over the six month period prior to the study (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 - Marijuana Use by Alberta Adolescents,
1981 - 1989**



- The same 1989 study showed that approximately 5% of adolescents had used hallucinogens, 2% had used cocaine, 2% had used crack, and 2% had used heroin.
- The number of adolescents admitted to AADAC treatment programs for their own alcohol or drug problem has grown almost 500% between 1980 and 1992. Adolescent admissions increased from 341 in 1980/81 to 1,684 in 1991/92.

D. CONSEQUENCES OF ILLICIT DRUG USE

- Primary illicit drug problems for AADAC adult and adolescent treatment clients are considerably different (Table 10).

Table 10
Primary Illicit Drug Problem for Adult and Adolescent Clients Discharged
from AADAC Treatment Programs, 1991-92

Drugs	Adults (18 years +)	Adolescents (12-17)
Cocaine	8.7%	3.3%
Cannabis/Hashish	5.5%	19.6%
Heroin/Opiates	3.1%	0.2%
Hallucinogens	0.2%	2.9%
Number of Clients	3,045	245

Source: AADAC Annual Report 1991/92.

- There were 5,897 criminal offenses related to drugs prosecuted through the courts in Alberta in 1990. Of these, 4,582 (78%) involved cannabis (Table 11).

Table 11
Drug-Related Criminal Offenses for Alberta, 1990

Drug	Possession	Trafficking	Importation	Cultivation	Total
Cannabis	3291	1173	12	106	4582
Cocaine	242	431	23	n.a.	696
Other Drugs	534	62	4	n.a.	600
Heroin	6	4	9	n.a.	19
Total	4073	1670	48	106	5897

Source: Statistics Canada.

- After standardizing for population, Alberta had the highest illicit drug possession offence rate in 1989 among all the provinces and territories.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- According to the 1990 National Drug Intelligence Estimate, a total of \$725,550 was seized in money and assets as a result of the RCMP Anti-Drug Profiteering program in 1989 in Alberta. This was the fourth highest total in the country. Since January of 1989, \$1 million was collected through the Anti-Drug Profiteering program in Edmonton courts.
- There were a total of 484 cases of AIDS in Alberta from 1980 to 1992. Of these, 17 (4%) transmissions of the virus occurred through injection drug use.
- Approximately 10% of the 27,849 individuals discharged from facilities funded or operated by AADAC in the 1991/92 fiscal year had used drugs by injection that year.
- In 1990, a study was conducted among injection drug users entering treatment at AADAC. It was found that virtually all were aware that the AIDS virus can be transmitted by sharing needles, 96% knew that it could be spread during sexual intercourse, and 95% were aware that a woman could infect her unborn child. However, half of these respondents still engaged in unsafe practices which put them at risk of contracting the AIDS virus.

E. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARD ILLICIT DRUG USE IN ALBERTA

- In a 1990 study, Canadians were presented with a variety of health issues for the government to be dealing with. Albertans ranked drug use as the second most important issue, second only to AIDS.
- In a 1989 study, it was found that almost a third (31%) of Albertans felt that the seriousness of community drug abuse was worse than compared to five years ago. Respondents were also asked whether anyone in their immediate family had ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs. Almost a third (30%) replied in the affirmative.
- The same study also found that a strong majority (80%) of Albertans felt that there should be more drug education/prevention programs in Alberta.
- Just over a third (34%) of Albertans surveyed in 1989, indicated that marijuana possession should not be criminal. Approximately 56% of Albertans felt that marijuana possession should be criminal.

REFERENCES

- AADAC. (1981/82 to 1991/92). Annual Report. Edmonton: Author.
- AADAC. (1992). Client Monitoring Information System, Special Data Run. Edmonton: Author.
- Action on Smoking and Health. (1992). Alberta's Tobacco Epidemic: A Real Health Crisis, ASH Position Paper #1. Edmonton: Author.
- Association of Canadian Distillers. (1991). Annual Statistical Report. Ottawa: Author.
- Association of Canadian Distillers. (1992). Information Sheets on Beverage Alcohol Taxation for Alberta. Ottawa: Author.
- Alberta Bureau of Statistics. (1988). Population Projections Alberta 1987 - 2016. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Health. (1992). Major Findings of Health Promotion Survey, 1990. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Health. (1992). Policy and Planning Services Division, Health, Economics and Statistics Branch, Special Data Run. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Health. (1989). Statistical Supplement - Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, 1988 - 1989. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Liquor Control Board. (1982 - 1991). Annual Report. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Solicitor General. (1992). Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Seven Year Perspective 1984 to 1990. Edmonton: Author.
- Alberta Transportation and Utilities. (1991). Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics. Edmonton: Author.
- Atwood, I. (1985). Alcohol Use in Alberta. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Clark, S. (1992). Licit Drug Diversion in Canada. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Dignam, C. (1982). Alcohol Use in Alberta: Costs and Consequences. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Eliany M., Giesbrecht, N., Wellman, B. & Worley, S. (editors). (1990). National Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (1989): Highlights Report. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

- Health and Welfare Canada. (1991). 1990 Narcotic, Controlled and Restricted Drug Statistics - Analysis Report. Ottawa: Author.
- Health and Welfare Canada. (1992). Smoking Behaviour of Canadians. Ottawa: Author.
- Holt, P. (1980). Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages in Alberta. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Kaiserman, M.J. & Ducharme-Danielson, C. (1992). Global Per Capita Consumption of Manufactured Cigarettes, 1990. Chronic Diseases in Canada, Volume 13, No. 4. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada.
- Krahn, H. & Roosmalen E. (1991). Workplace Smoking Policies and Public Reaction in Alberta: An Analysis of the 1990 Alberta Survey. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada.
- Millar, W. (1992). A Trend to a Healthier Lifestyle. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Northcott, H.C. & Bachynsky, J.A. (1990). The Utilization of Prescription Medicines, Nonprescription Medicines and Alternative Health Care Therapies. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Population Research Laboratory.
- The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. (1992). Fourth Annual Report. Ottawa: Author.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (1992). The RCMP National Drug Intelligence Estimate 1991. Ottawa: Author.
- Slavik, W. (1989). Alcohol in Alberta: Perspectives on Its Use and Effects. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Slavik, W. (1987). Alcohol Use in Alberta. Edmonton: AADAC.
- Statistics Canada. (1991). Annual Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 1990/1991 (Catalogue #85-211). Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada. (1990). Canadian Crime Statistics (Catalogue #85-205). Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada. (1990). The Control and Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (Catalogue #63-202). Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada. (1990). Juristat Service Bulletin (Catalogue #85-002, vol. 10, no. 6). Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada. (1990). Juristat Service Bulletin (Catalogue #85-002, vol. 10, no. 11). Ottawa: Author.
- Statistics Canada. (1991). Juristat Service Bulletin (Catalogue #85-002, vol. 11, no. 13). Ottawa: Author.

Alcohol and Drug Use Summary Report

Statistics Canada. (1992). The 1991 General Social Survey - Cycle 6 Health Data (special data run by the Alberta Bureau of Statistics). Ottawa: Author.

Statistics Canada. (1988). Population (Catalogue #91-210). Ottawa: Author.

Statistics Canada. (1992). Restaurant, Caterer and Tavern Statistics, December 1991 (Catalogue #63-011). Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. & Arraiz, G. (1990). Smoking-Attributable Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost in Canada, 1986. Chronic Diseases in Canada, vol. 11, no. 1. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada.

Statistics Canada (1997). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Statistics Canada (1998). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Statistics Canada (1999). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (1997). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (1998). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (1999). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2000). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2001). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2002). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2003). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2004). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2005). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2006). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2007). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2008). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2009). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

Wong, T. (2010). *Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada: A National Survey*. Catalogue no 95-01. Ottawa: Author.

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada



3 3286 50421 7627